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ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue contains feature articles and short reports on how and why family structures are undergoing substantial change in many parts of the world. These articles include: (1) "The Changing Family Structure," a review of how families are changing and why; (2) "Peru: Families in the Andes"; (3) "Thailand: Families of the Garbage Dump"; (4) "Arrernte Families, Culture, and Environment," about Australia's Aboriginal peoples; (5) "Thriving against the Odds," which examines how children can thrive despite adverse circumstances; and (6) a review of the book "Changing Family Life in East Africa: Women and Children at Risk." The issue also contains a network news column with short reports on programs in Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Kenya, Namibia, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Two reports from field project staff examine the state of early childhood care and education in Latin America and the production of a video on Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. Other columns discuss the use of educational materials in a malaria campaign and road safety for children. (MDM)

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Bernard van Leer Foundation

Newsletter

Number 72 October 1993

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ED 366 438

The changing family structure

The United Nations Organisation has agreed that 1994 is to be the International Year of the Family. This issue of the *Newsletter* is therefore largely devoted to the theme of family and family change.

The word 'family' should not conjure up one single image: there is an enormous variety of families in the world. Similarly, the roles which individual family members play do not conform to immutable patterns. Nor are family structures and characteristics constant: there has always been change and there always will be.

Most families appear to owe at least part of their present form and character to long term influences such as evolution, religious or cultural beliefs, and the structures and dynamics of the social groups in which they exist. But many have been, and are being, reshaped abruptly, with the roles of members also dramatically shifting. Such changes may happen as a consequence of war, economic and political factors; and also because of famine, death, divorce, disease and natural disasters.

The conclusion must be that family is a concept which is expressed in many ways: in one part of the world it might consist of a number of mothers living communally but apart from men and sharing the care of their children; in another, it might be two adults and a small number of children. And, in both places, there will be variations of these, and alternatives to them.

Common characteristics of families

It is possible to try to identify some physical characteristics that families have in common. Because of our interest in early childhood development, for us a family includes at least one child and at least one other person, probably an adult. That adult is likely to have some kind of blood tie to the child and may be a parent – although, if there is just one parent, it will probably not be the father.

But even these outlines, slight as they are, are not very reliable. For example: the street children of Colombia and Brazil form family units among themselves; substitute or surrogate parents are found in some societies, adoptive parents in many more; family sizes may range from an isolated group of two, to a cohesive throng which is inseparably enmeshed with its society's structures and culture.

Perhaps the only sure way to identify a family is to recognise it when, in its own eyes, it is clearly operating as one. That implies looking beyond the preconceptions that we carry with us; and being aware of the local norms, their variations and exceptions.

Changes, families and children's needs

When the structures of families change, their nature may change as well. More important from our point of view, change may make them less able to provide

In this issue

The changing family structure: a review of how families are changing and why; including: **Belgium** - Changes, consequences and positive ways forward *page 2*; **Mozambique** - Rebuilding family life *page 4*; **Ireland** - When Daddy isn't your father *page 6*, A view from Ireland *page 7*, Is my family changing? Yes it is *page 13*; **Peru** - Families in the Andes *page 8*; **Thailand** - Families of the garbage dump *page 9*; **Australia** - Arrernte familes, culture and environment *page 11*.

Thriving against the odds *page 12*
Teenage parents *page 14*
Changing family life in East Africa *page 15*

Network news: *pages 16-17*

Report from the field: States of the practice in Latin America, *pages 18-19*; making a video in Israel, *pages 19-20*

Health and nutrition: the use of materials in a malaria campaign, *page 21*

Working with families, *page 22*

Playthemes: road safety, *page 23*

the kinds of support that children need and which – in almost all societies – their families may best provide. So what do children need from their families? There are many ideas about this but also some agreement about the elements which must be preserved, developed or compensated for. They can be summed up as:

- a feeling of physical and emotional security which derives from being with their principal care givers;
- a sense of belonging;
- a place in which they can develop and learn in a safe and stimulating environment – especially in their early years.

Although other groupings – for example, peer groups or schools – can provide these, families may be uniquely able to offer their children quality, quantity, depth and centrality in these areas.

How are family structures changing?

Families sometimes change in ordered, predictable and manageable ways, sometimes abruptly, unexpectedly and traumatically. For example, they grow bigger or smaller as they acquire new members or lose former ones, perhaps through pleasurably anticipated birth, perhaps through sudden and violent death. They can also become bigger because their members are living to greater ages and staying active for longer: great-grandparents are becoming more and more usual in many countries; while grandparents tend now to have more energetic and independent lifestyles, thus changing their roles within the family.

right: in many societies grandparents continue to play a supportive role for young parents. Adapted from Parenting, *published by: SERVOL, Trinidad*

Supportive grandparents

Loving
Grandparents give a very special kind of loving
Taking Care
When Gran comes for the day (or evening) Mum gets a chance to leave the children in good care
Wisdom
and Experience
Giving Advice
A little advice from Gran can be very helpful because she has learnt from bringing up her own children
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The changing family structure

Belgium: changes, consequences and positive ways forward

In this article, project workers from the Foundation-supported *School en Gezin* (School and Home) project in Belgium describe their experiences in adapting a model for participatory planning processes to help their work with migrant families.

The model has had an interesting history: having started life in the weapons industry, it was then appropriated for use in agricultural projects in developing countries.

Changes in family structures in the mining town of Heusden-Zolder are related closely to the closing of the coal mines: originally Turkish men came to Belgium to work in the mine as labourers so that they could support their families. They had status as the breadwinners and they therefore were important role models for their children.

Then the mines closed and the men lost their jobs. This produced many consequences, for example:

- men are no longer enjoying the status of breadwinner;
- their function as role models for their children has changed;
- they are at home more and may want a say in the running of the household – the women have had to adjust to this and it has caused tensions;
- the women have much less freedom now;
- the men have much less contact with Belgian colleagues, and thus hear fewer Belgian ideas and opinions;
- they also spend much more time in Turkish cafes and only come into contact with Turkish ideas, which produces
- more conflicts at home: the way they think now lags behind the evolving ideas of their wives and the children.

We – the mothers and ourselves – therefore asked each other if we shouldn't work at the concerns this assessment had highlighted.

At the time, we were already searching for a way of increasing the mothers' involvement in the project: our aim was to enable mothers to participate in our work.

Coincidentally we then came into contact with Bob Peters of South Research. He proposed that we should work with the DIP method, the *doelgerichte-interventieplanning* (target-group focused intervention planning). This came out of the weapons industry and was adapted by South Research for use in agricultural projects in developing countries. It is a participatory planning method that involves target group and project workers working together.

It operates through a 'problem tree' – a visual representation of a problem – that is turned into a 'positive tree' by working out what can be done. From this a plan is jointly produced to improve agricultural practice. Although at this time DIP had not been adapted for social work, Bob Peeters was sure that it could be a viable working method for us. We therefore went on a five day training course in which we learned about its principles.

To motivate the mothers and to ensure their cooperation, the DIP method was introduced in very general terms during an open class day. This was done using what is called the 'visionary approach' – that is, deciding on ideal outcomes at the start.

It is also common for other family members to assume new roles or discard old ones, so producing new dynamics and harmonics. These may change family structures from within. For example: women may become wage earners and be obliged to pass part of their roles as mothers on to other care givers, perhaps to children within the family or to fathers; children may become demanding learners and seek better education, so threatening their families' economic stability; young adults may decide to participate in development activities within their communities and may thus shift perspectives and expectations within their families; teenage girls may become pregnant, so adding a new generation.

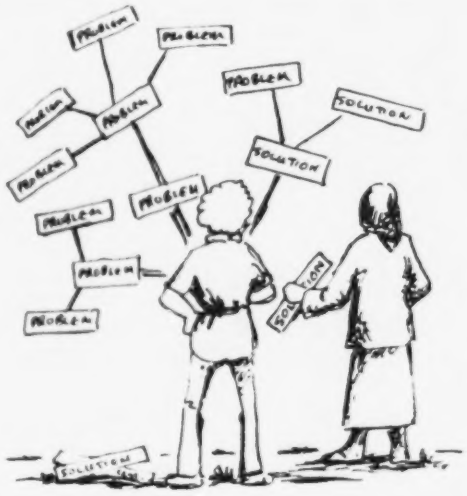
Acceptable models

Religions, political ideologies and societies promote acceptable family models and such models are influential – perhaps because they are accepted, perhaps because pressure is brought to bear, perhaps because inducements are offered. Governments may decide to directly influence family size. This is currently true, for example, in Greece where tax and benefit incentives encourage parents to have more children; and in China where one child per couple is the decreed norm and more are only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Other influences are also evident. Societies may question the desirability of certain family structures: those which include only one parent, for example. This may fuel public reaction which may, in turn, allow legislation to be introduced to make the missing parent – usually the father – contribute to the cost of keeping his children. Here the aim is seemingly laudable but the reality may be different. One possible outcome that has to be guarded against is that lone parent families – many of whom exist on very low incomes – will suffer further financial hardship as state support is reduced in line with the missing parent's notional, but often irrecoverable, contribution.

Poverty

According to The state of the world's children 1992 (UNICEF) one quarter of humanity lives in absolute poverty. It does not need imagination to know how that can affect the world's poorest families: there are innumerable descriptions and photographs, and many kilometres of film and video tape. Among many important demands, the report calls for basic



We did this as follows:

1. the mothers were asked what their dreams were for the future of their children;

2. then we asked them what problems they were experiencing with their children;

3. they then had to imagine what could be done to bridge the gap between the reality and their dream image.

The mothers were asked to commit themselves to six subsequent meetings. This was important because that was when the problem analysis would be carried out. During those meetings, everyone wrote down problems they had, related to the caring and bringing up of their children. The problems were then discussed so that everyone was clear about the meaning of each of them. The result was 52 problems, each written on its own card.

During the third get-together we began to work with the 'problem tree'. The mothers had to work with problems in which they could find both causes and effects. They then had to find one cause or one consequence of each problem.

For example, 'The children have no Belgian friends **because** they cannot speak Dutch'; **or** 'They don't speak Dutch **because** they have no Belgian friends'.

During the sixth get-together, we assembled clusters of problems. The women made the following: bringing up children; free time; their environment; toys; and school and television. From these, they chose 'bringing up children' as the cluster with which they most wanted to work.

Through DIP processes, mothers are now much more involved in our work. We also have better insights about each other and our situations and therefore understand each other better. This, in turn, leads to better interchanges and these are mutually beneficial.

The next step is to do more work on identifying some of the problems that concern the mothers, using DIP. Then we can consider together how to understand these problems and do something to improve matters. ❑

Mozambique: rebuilding family life

War can devastate families and, for many, it is not until the war is over that the job of re-establishing a kind of normality can begin. This article describes some of the effects of war on family structures, and discusses some of the complexities involved in reuniting displaced children with their families.

The background

Two decades of war in Mozambique produced hundreds of thousands of casualties: fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. People fled, families scattered, children were lost and, given the complicated topography of much of the country, regrouping was impossible. Children therefore found themselves wandering alone and often prey to all manner of dangers. Some were captured and were forced to carry war supplies, and some became instrumentalised – made into fighting soldiers who were barely able to carry a rifle yet were obliged to shoot with it.

The country's normal economic infrastructure was also severely disrupted and this, combined with the effects of a long drought, meant that many people lost their livelihood and had to leave their traditional homesteads. Leaving has a profound significance for Mozambican families: their homestead is the place where they uniquely feel that they belong. Each family has its place in a local culture which is rooted firmly in well established beliefs and which is structured according to well understood principles. All of this is presided over by the local elders.

The legacy

The war produced a vast horde of refugees, many within Mozambique, others in Malawi and Zimbabwe. Among them were large and small fragments of families, remote from their homesteads. Among them too, were as many as 200,000 children who either did not know the whereabouts of their parents, or who may have suffered the dreadful trauma of seeing them killed or executed. In this situation, the most essential need was to recreate the fabric and structure of family life.

The idea of a reunification programme for families in these situations is not a new one. And not only are there precedents and models but informal systems and networks develop as people struggle to regain as much as they can of their normal lives. These worked well in Mozambique and many families benefited. To these were added sophisticated computerised systems for identifying children, locating surviving family members and bringing them together.

But there can be many problems in reunification, some of which are straight-forward, some of which are much more complex. For example, some children were taken in by other families. However, Mozambican children belong to their families and their families belong to their homestead: it is hard for a child to become part of a family from elsewhere. Yet they may have become settled with that new family, will have changed it by belonging to it, will change it again as they leave.

During 20 years of war people changed in all sorts of ways, perhaps most of all the children. For example: six year old dependent children may have turned into hardened battle veterans; or black market racketeers; or mothers. Now they have to build up new relationships with the people who were once closest to them but who may now be different themselves.

And their roles will have changed. Had they stayed with their families, they would have enjoyed the normal development opportunities that families can most readily provide. Now their families are heavily overburdened by recovering from the effects of the war, yet somehow they must compensate for their children's lost years. Had the children stayed, they would also have developed particular skills and have been prepared for certain roles within their families – helping to farm for example, or to prepare food for market. Having missed the training and preparation, they may now be an economic liability rather than an asset.

Some lessons

Anecdotal evidence from Mozambique and elsewhere suggests that children can be protected by their families from all except the worst effects of war, and can thrive despite the mayhem around them. Children also show extraordinary resilience. They can cope with almost any kind of change in their environments, and may spontaneously find new ways of carrying on and developing quite normally. But this usually depends on a good trusting relationship with at least one adult. Quick recovery from terrible experiences is also possible. However, the long term effects have still to be determined.

It is also clear that families, other children, members of the extended family and traditional healers have special roles to play: when traumatised children are left to the care which is naturally provided within their community, they usually return to normal behaviour. Moreover, when professional expertise has been used, it has not always been successful: treated children have withdrawn into themselves when the treatment has stopped. And such care is also too expensive to be provided on a large scale: more appropriate ways must be used – those linked to the resilience of children and the strength of the resources available in their communities, for example. ❑

In 1991, the Foundation funded a pilot pre-school programme for displaced children in Nampula Province. This was in collaboration with the Children and War programme of Save the Children.

calls for basic investments in people; and highlights the need to tackle debt, aid and trade issues in a way that enables people in developing countries to earn a decent living.

However, the current world economic recession first affected many of the poorest, is hurting them most and will affect them for much longer. And the gap between the richer and the poorer countries has continued to widen – as has the gap between the richer and poorest families in almost all countries.

below: teaching materials produced for use with refugee families in Thailand by the Khmer Women's Association

Although there are exceptions – for example, as the economies of some countries grow despite the global recession – many poor families are being driven down to new levels of poverty, and poverty will shape and change them for years to come.

Families and health

Good health enhances the ability of families to stay together and operate successfully. But it depends on vaccinations, good diet, and a healthy life style and environment. And, when bad health strikes, appropriate medical care is essential. However, many of these health-related needs are denied to the world's poor families. For example, vaccinations do not always reach those who are most at risk, usually because of a lack of money or inadequate vaccination programmes. The reality is that the structures and daily well-being of poor families can be profoundly affected by health problems. For example, if members of a family fall sick there is often a hierarchy of preference to determine who receives expensive medicines. Bread winners and children come above mothers who may therefore have to do without.

Today, one disease dominates all others in the public consciousness to the detriment of more widespread diseases: AIDS. However, for those families which are affected, it can be devastating in many ways. For example, if wage earners contract the so-called AIDS virus (HIV), their contribution to the family's income is progressively diminished as they both earn less and have to use more of what they do earn for medicines. Their consequent death may destroy the family's viability, may leave orphans and other dependents. Meanwhile, the lack of information about living safely with HIV positive family members, or the physical impossibility of complying with appropriate measures, can mean that the virus spreads within the family, so compounding its problems.

Among families who are most at risk from AIDS are those whose women and girls have been forced into prostitution because no other work is open to them. Many examples can be found in Thailand. There, the prevalence of AIDS is such that clients are now seeking younger and younger girls, especially those from rural areas: they believe that infection is less likely from such girls. The effect is that more rural families than before are losing their girls and their young women to a dangerous occupation in a distant city.

Dominant and minority cultures

In Australia, USA, Latin America and elsewhere, the original inhabitants were long ago overwhelmed by incoming European settlers. In the process they lost most of their lands, had their wealth taken away and found their cultures derided and sometimes destroyed. Many tribes and communities were reduced to a marginal existence and others to lowly positions within the incoming dominant culture.

Now there is interest among many indigenous peoples in reasserting the value of their traditional ways, and re-establishing them. Much of such work is based on the idea of reassessment and revalidation coupled with adaptation to today's realities. Driving out the descendants of the 'conquerors' is not on the agenda; the aim is mutual respect and coexistence. Part of this involves looking again at the traditional family structures and considering what was beneficial in them. The task then is to find ways of demonstrating their value in order to gain acceptance from the new generations. But this is happening in an age when communication technology is selling ever more seductive images of alien life styles into ever more remote communities.

Migrant families

Communities of foreign migrant families may face parallel situations: they too may wish to maintain their traditional values and ways while surrounded by a bigger and well-established community. They may also have to face specific additional problems: for example, hostility because they do not conform to the host society's norms, or resentment because they are felt to be taking jobs or benefits.

Rural families coming to cities for work are likely to face more direct, practical problems. By leaving their original environment, they cut themselves off from the informal support networks which may have helped their stability as families. Once arrived they usually find that life is much more difficult

When Daddy isn't your father

I sit here now, staring into space,
for I know I must tell him
of his past and former Dad.
I know it won't be easy
I knew it never would
If only I could change things
My God I wish I could!
Where do I start?
What do I say?
I don't want to hurt him
or drive him away.
But I know deep down,
I must tell him the truth
of a love that was once,
but not made forever.
How I left his Dad for a better life,
not one of sadness, of stress
or of strife.
I did it all to give him the best.
Please God let him love me,
and understand why!
Why I left his Dad,
for a better guy.

Shirley Keating, June 1993
Togher pre-school and family centre, Ireland

than they had hoped, that work is hard to come by, that housing is expensive and that adequate food – all of which now has to be bought – is beyond their means. To survive, most family members will have to find new roles, and children will have to adapt to a radically different environment which may include new patterns of care. And all such adaptations may still leave the family marginalised. Holding a family together in such circumstances can be difficult. It may be impossible to ensure that changes are ordered and positive.

right: a selection of children's pictures about their families from the 'Gorgeous Mosaic' project by The Children's Atelier, Inc.

Here they are used as the cover of For Children's Sake: the promise of family preservation, *by Joan Barthel, available from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 250 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10177-0026, USA*

Outcomes and responses

We have to acknowledge that changes in family structures often result in a degradation of children's environments. For instance, the adults who are closest to children may spend less time with them, and therefore offer less support, love and care for them. We also have to accept that, if children do lose some or all of what they need from their families, it is essential to restore or replace what has been lost, or to compensate for it. One approach to this starts with the idea of keeping families together, helping them to adjust to a new structure, and working with them to find ways of coping with new situations or pressures. Often the focus will be on enabling them to understand what is happening to them and to seek practical ways forward. Such programmes may also include preventative elements to help families avoid unnecessary or undesirable changes, those brought about by unwanted teenage pregnancies, for example. (see page 15)

However, some events and situations are simply overwhelming. They cannot be coped with and the result is catastrophic change. The most obvious examples of these are famines, wars and conflicts. They may wipe out some families, scatter others and leave children not just isolated but also unsure if they still have families. In Mozambique, 20 years of war have devastated many families, removing many of the males, driving the people from their homesteads and wrenching children away from their principal care givers and their trusted environments. In such circumstances, peace brings with it a need to identify children, locate their families and reunite them. (see page 4)

Yet, even when families face seemingly insuperable odds, they are not necessarily damaged. This may be because they are made up of individuals, each of whom has particular characteristics, each one of which contributes something to the family's dynamics and to its structure. Together these can add up to a considerable strength. In addition, many studies note the phenomenon of resilience – the ability of children to thrive despite considerable adversity (see page 12). Something similar is evident in people of all ages. Despite all the problems that face them, and despite the fact that their lives appear to offer no joy, they are able to bounce back and face each day with a confident determination.

But is the family valued?

Most of us are now or have been members of families. We know that there can be terrible problems within families and that they are not necessarily as competent as could be hoped. But we also know that they have enormous potential for benefit for both children and adults: our families can offer us our best chance of knowing security, a sense of belonging and a place to thrive – no matter what form they may have, and no matter how much that form may change.

Many cultures go further and claim that the family is the basic building block of society. But isn't there a contradiction within this and, simultaneously,

some self-deceit? Aren't families – those building blocks – often battered, reshaped, sometimes broken by social, economic, religious and political pressures from within those same societies? And when societies are built up, are they always built up in the ways in which families want and need: do those who control the building always have the will to respond to such wants and needs? Or if they do have the will, do they always have the ability, the resources or the power?

And isn't it also true that some of the biggest pressures and influences on family structures are either incidental effects of large scale human interventions and activities, or are regarded as acceptable sacrifices to some greater cause – for example: supra-national economic operations; political ideologies; national and international power strategies; and so on?

Few would agree that the family is all, and that everything should be constructed around the family. But surely even fewer would agree that families – in all their various forms – are irrelevant to the ordered and purposeful running of almost any of the world's many different societies. ❑

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'Wedded to welfare' in - *The Sunday Times*, 11 July 1993, London, UK

A view from Ireland

Unemployment has brought about major changes in family life, not just the loss of income, which is bad enough, but also in the interaction of the parents of the family. For so many years the man was seen as the head of the family because he earned the wages and the woman was there to look after him and run the home.

When unemployment hit a family, its structure had to change with less money and the man at home all day. The woman had to be the strong one then: juggle the money and prepare the children to cope with a father all day as against a few hours before. As they settled into this new routine, women felt the need to look outside the home for a new interest and support to carry the strain. Family Centres came into their own in these areas, providing advice, help, friendship, as well as education for the woman. The benefits of this outlet were carried back to the family, and parents got more involved.

While the children are growing up in these families, they become aware of their parents' problems caused by unemployment, and when they reach their twenties they are reluctant to leave the family home and set up home themselves. So we see boys and girls of 20 or 30 still living at home. Also we have some girls having babies and rearing them within the same family unit. The same goes for boys who bring their children home to play Dad for a couple of hours while still living with mammy and daddy themselves.

We live in an age where parents feel terribly judged through their children. We would like perfect children who speak and behave properly. Parents are not prepared for parenthood and barely know how to change a nappy and don't realise it's a job for life. If this job is not a success and they don't do well, the family starts to falls apart and the children are the first to suffer. And the parents don't know how to ask for help without feeling a failure. ❑

Marion McCabe, *Togher pre-school and family centre*

The changing family stucture

Peru: families in the Andes

Dr Jeanine Anderson

Dr Jeanine Anderson is a consultant in childhood and family matters for the Peruvian Ministry of Education. In this article – commissioned especially for *Newsletter* by the Ministry – she considers the impact of a politically unstable and insecure environment on a conservative people. She also suggests that ways forward can be found by building on some aspects of traditional family structures.

Peru is a country undergoing rapid change. Processes of urbanisation, integration into the world economy and gradual evolution towards a stable system of participatory government have been underway for several decades. Politically, its democratic transition has been difficult, with the 1980s marked by a ferocious terrorist movement that made large areas of the Andes and Amazon basin insecure. Peru is also a mosaic of cultural and ethnic groups – more than 50 in the Andes and Amazon basin alone. These are the poorest areas of the country, both in terms of their income levels, and of their infrastructure and public services.

Hardly any families from these places have been left untouched by the migratory movement to the cities, and those which remain have been opened up to new ways of relating to the national territory and to modern technology. However, the poverty of the countryside remains relentless and over half of smallholder family income in the mountains is derived from non-agricultural pursuits: for example, men migrate for work and are away for months or even years. One result was that, in 1985-1986, 17 per cent of rural families were headed by women. Yet credit policies and agricultural extension programmes remain directed at men, thereby accentuating the marginalisation of large numbers of rural families.

above: young children learn by watching family and community life from the security of mothers' or older siblings' backs

The traditional family system

Andean families live in nucleated settlements and partnerships within the community is the norm. Traditionally, Andean peasants organise themselves in nuclear families but they live close to the kin of both spouses and maintain an active exchange of goods, labour and services. An extensive kinship network is thus a reality for most Andean families. It provides assistance in the tasks of daily living, company, and a safety net for elderly and infirm relatives.

The economic strategy of the Andean family is carefully organised along lines of age and gender. For example, during cultivating and planting the men and boys carry out most of the work in the fields, while pasturing and marketing is the work of the women and girls. Children become part of the strategy at an early age, a pattern that is coupled to intense socialisation for obedience and responsibility. Girls as young as six or seven might be entrusted with taking the herd to the pastures, perhaps with an even younger sibling in their care as well. In the absence of the parents, children – with minimal supervision from older relatives – are expected to carry out all the routine tasks of household management and care of stock.

Children in the Andes

Andean children enjoy a close and indulgent relationship with their parents in the first years of their lives, especially their mothers from whose backs they observe the family and community. At the age of two or three, the child is turned over to its older siblings or relative for care as the mother resumes her work or begins another pregnancy. Both boys and girls can be seen with babies on their backs or keeping them in tow as they go about their play. They will be severely punished for any negligence. Parents also repress any signs of jealousy or rivalry between siblings, and most observers agree that the play group of siblings, cousins and the children of neighbours is a pleasurable substitute for mother's care.

Children are allowed to participate freely in nearly all phases of village life and learn about their culture through observation and imitation: parents are not conscious of much intentional teaching beyond basic social etiquette. Yet children have been observed to use complex classification systems for elements of their natural world.

The importance of sending children to school is recognised but so is the fact that children in school cannot work for their families' benefit. Putting children through secondary school is likely to be an even greater sacrifice: it may mean sending them to live in a provincial town or city. Many young people become economically self-sufficient at this time: girls try to study at night while supporting themselves as domestic servants. But they quickly learn that, even if they are lucky enough to find a *patrona* willing to let them attend classes, their obligations leave them little time for homework. Boys work as porters near markets, as helpers on construction sites or as casual workers in small scale manufacturing. Many cherish a dream of going to university or of educating themselves for a technical career.

Andean child-rearing remains conservative in many respects. Parents wish their children to do well in school but do not push them to excel: becoming a dependable member of the group is more important. The especially rebellious, talented or non-conformist youths are sloughed off into the stream of migrants heading for the cities.

above: a child's view of family life. This drawing originally appeared in PEIP Boletin, *published by the Peruvian Ministry of Education and* INIDE *(Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones y Desarrollo de la Educacion - National Institute for Research and Development in Education)*

Children of the crisis

The political violence of the past decade has taken many victims in Andean families, yet the violence of poverty is likely to have more long term effects. Peasant communities have been disrupted in a large area of the central and southern Andes, and many thousands of families have become refugees in shanty towns in the coastal cities. There, children's participation in the family economy takes on a new meaning: they will be sent out to work at an even younger age. As adult women in poor urban families are also obliged to increase their economic participation, young girls dedicate longer hours to household tasks. While work in urban settings may promote the learning of useful skills in young boys – those who work as fare collectors all day on city buses, for example – it is doubtful that the same could be said of girls' involvement in housework.

In rural areas, schools must be made more relevant to children's needs, more understandable to parents and more relevant to local development. The traditional social settings for children's learning in the family and the local community are markedly different from the school setting. Programmes that could provide a transition are solely needed. Such programmes would find ways of reproducing the children's play groups and the loops of learning wherein older children transmit their knowledge and skills to younger siblings, cousins and friends and, in turn, are challenged by them to grow in competence and responsibility. At the same time, parents must be given a clearer idea of the abilities that their children require for success in school and in the larger world they will face as adults. This will imply changes in some aspects of Andean child rearing.

Rebuilding through kin groups

Throughout these transitions, the Andean kin group will be a valuable resource. The function of the kin group in re-building Andean communities destroyed by political violence is clear: the extended family provides a home for orphans and permits relatives to regroup in areas ravaged by internal warfare. Bridging as they do rural, small town and urban settings, the members of the kin group represent a wide range of styles, attitudes, models and possibilities that the children can draw on. Observing the higher material standard of living of urban cousins can, of course, be destabilising for rural children. Avoiding this result depends ultimately on the commitment of the Peruvian nation to policies for changing the terms of trade between the Andean mountains and the coast, and to policies for promoting social and economic justice. ❑

The changing family structure

Thailand: families of the garbage dump

Dr Anne-Marie Van den Bossche

The Foundation-supported Nongkhaem project in Thailand works directly with families who literally live on a rubbish dump: their homes are built on it and they extract a living from it.

In this article, the project's director describes how families are changed by this kind of existence and how each succeeding generation is affected in the same sorts of ways. She shows how women usually carry the burden of responsibility when problems arise, while men evade it. She also shows how family support is provided, and cycles of family disintegration can be broken.

For Oi, the day starts at five o'clock in the morning: while the baby and her three year old daughter still sleep, she creeps to a small platform at the rear of the little shack she shares with her husband and the children. She lights the charcoal fire to boil the rice and fills a basin to do the laundry. Oean, her husband, snores loudly, still under the influence of last night's whisky. When she is halfway through her early morning chores, the baby wakes up. She runs in quickly so her husband is not disturbed: he is always in a very foul mood after an evening out.

Oi got married at the tender age of 17 – after she discovered that she was pregnant. She had known Oean for five years. Oi – the second in a family of four children – left school at 11 after just five years of primary education. She had begged her mother not to take her from school but, at that time, her mother had such a hard time that there was no choice: it was a matter of survival.

Oi had been heartbroken and, one by one, had lost her friends from school. Now she belonged to the other group in the community, among those who divided their time between their small dirty shacks and picking over the local rubbish dump. For a year, Oi looked after the house and her two younger siblings so that her mother could work even longer hours. Her brother Ram had only completed third grade and had started to scavenge on the dump at the age of ten. At that time her father still lived with the family. However, there were frequent fights between him and her mother as he began to spend more time and money outside the family. Then one day he went off to live with another woman. Oi couldn't really blame him because even she had a hard time coping with her mother's temper. But she did blame him for making her leave school.

Then Ram – who had earned an essential income for the family – left home to roam the streets of Bangkok with his friends. With no father and with his mother's bad temper, he had figured out that he would be better off on his own. This meant new responsibilities for Oi – now she had to earn money too – and more problems for the little ones: now they had to care for themselves.

But then she met Oean. He was a joyful and playful man 13 years older than Oi, and he had a motorcycle and, as Oi reached adolescence, he began to make advances. First he took her to movies and other places Oi had never been to during the long monotonous years at home. She enjoyed being

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away from her mother and her bad temper. And when Oean wanted more, Oi thought she had a ticket for life. Then she got pregnant.

At first her mother was disgusted but Oean proposed marriage and with the arrival of little Noei, she began to accept the situation. Then came Nung, the headaches and the fights about money. Soon Oean started spending more time with his friends than he did with his family. He gambled and drank and often was in a bad temper. Oi started to understand why her mother had become as she was.

As long as the children were small, however, she depended on Oean. But, in her heart, she knew that one day she would take the children and leave – just as her father and Ram had left. However, it is Oean who will probably leave and go off to live with another woman.

Common experiences

While this might seem an exaggerated tale of misfortune, it is what many women live through in the slum community around Nongkhaem and probably in many other communities throughout the world. It is not even one of the saddest stories. People of previous generations came to the big city to find fortune and escape the hardships of the rice fields. Soon, however, they found out that life in the city is even harder. But, for whatever reason – the prospect of money, the hope of a better life, not wanting to lose face by returning to their villages – they stayed.

above: two sides of life on a rubbish dump in Thailand: care givers in a purpose built day centre; and the day to day realities for families

They didn't reorganise their family structures, nor the roles of individuals. What worked in a village within an extended family turned out to be a disaster in the city. A family with only one breadwinner turned out to be inadequate so mothers had to leave their children in order to generate extra income... but there was no one to look after the children because the elders hadn't followed the exodus.

Stress, agression and abuse

Excessive stress on the family soon brought about aggression and abuse and, as men are allowed much greater freedom than are women, they soon started turning elsewhere for pleasure and comfort. Much needed money was thus wasted and this resulted in more fights and finally in families breaking up. Many children raised under these circumstances are the adults of today's slums. They have had to fend for themselves and they expect their offspring to do the same. Family values are weak and the position of the family is very precarious.

Postitive moves

In an attempt to reverse part of this downward trend, the Foundation for Slum Child Care – under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana – has set up various programmes in the slum communities of Nongkhaem. The first was a mother and child health centre in which three local mothers are employed alongside two trained nurses. The centre focuses on preventive health care and support for women. It takes away some of their burden by offering low cost health services and counselling and by bringing women together.

The second programme is a community day care centre run by a child development specialist and a team of nurses recruited from within the community. This programme takes a lot of the burden from families by offering stimulating services for under-fives. Parents also get support with all sorts of problems, ranging from housing registration and birth certificates, to the behaviour of their children. Mothers are invited to work in the centre on rotation, thus enabling them to stay close to their children. Fathers have regular discussion groups about the future of their children, and about the importance of their roles within the family.

Parents are also motivated to open savings accounts for their children's future education, and there is close cooperation between them and the centre's staff through meetings and home visits. All these things are designed to decrease family stress and break-up, increase parents' pride in their families and create an environment of opportunity.

The third programme provides extra-curricular education for school drop-outs, and educational and recreational activities for school age children. It includes literacy activities, a mobile library, story telling and skills training. It also focuses on family planning for teenagers.

Now Oi has someone she can consult when Noei and Nung are sick, or when she doesn't feel well herself. The care giver at the health centre who makes her feel more positive about her situation and proud to be the mother of two lovely children. During the day she brings her children to the centre and earns herself some extra income. She has time to meet other people and find new friends. She likes to read and borrows books from the library to improve her skills. She is now considering enroling for a dress making course so that she could work at home.

At last she can leave what she saw as her cage and go out to meet the world around her. Her relationship with Oean has not changed but at least she now has confidence in herself and is less dependent on him. ⌟

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Arrernte families, culture and environment

Ellis Eyre

Ellis Eyre is the Materials Coordinator of the Foundation-supported Intelyape-lyape Akaltye Project run by the Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs, Australia.

This article offers his view of the complex ways in which Aboriginal family structures are closely bound up in both Aboriginal culture and the natural world, and of the ways in which changes in one inevitably have consequences for the others. He also discusses ways to counter damaging and irrelevant outside influences as the dominant culture becomes more invasive.

The town of Alice Springs (population 25,000) is situated in Central Australia, the geographical heart of Australia. It is also in the middle of Arrernte country. About four to five thousand Arrernte speakers live in Alice Springs, in several other communities and in numerous 'outstations' (more remote and smaller communities). Most outstations consist of a couple of closely related extended families and have a strong traditional link to the land they occupy.

Arrernte people identify themselves very strongly through their language, which is related to family, country and 'dreamings' – totemic ancestors that took their form from the natural environment. Even small differences between dialects can distinguish families and 'countries' (traditional Arrernte lands). Traditionally all newborn infants belong to a dreaming: children come from the land, are part of the land and will return to the land on their deaths. Their dreamings not only connect them with the powers who shaped the world at the beginning of time, but also group them socially according to places and species.

right: reuniting families with their culture – a scheme of work to foster respect for Arrernte ways and law

Through their relationship with the land, Aborigines have traditionally grouped all people and their environments according to culturally determined allegiances, to clans and to extended families. Thus individuals are assured of their place within society, and this placing determined their rights, priveleges and obligations in relation to anyone else they might meet. Such relationships governed the basis of behaviour throughout traditional Australia. At the same time, children's social, economic and religious obligations throughout their lives are determined by their membership of their families: kinship was and is at the core of the Arrernte culture.

The coming of the European white man to Central Australia dramatically disrupted the Arrernte way of life. Their rich country was quickly grabbed by pastoralists, forcing them away from water holes and their food supplies. Although missionaries worked to save the tribes from both starvation and aggression, they also forbade Arrernte beliefs and lifestyles. In particular, they discredited kinship patterns and obligations, acknowledged only nuclear families, removed children from parents, forbade the speaking of Aboriginal languages in schools and banned any traditional religious ceremonies. They also broke down traditional ties with the land by moving clan groups away from their lands and by resettling groups with different languages on Arrernte land.

However, despite these setbacks, and despite government assimilation policies during the first half of this century, Arrernte culture and language has remained strong. Today, Aboriginal Australians seek to determine their own lifestyles, and maintain their culture, identities and languages. They are doing this by establishing and taking control of organisations which deal with all aspects of their lives, such as health, housing, education, legal aid, land rights, and the media.

But, in recent years, Aboriginal people in Central Australia have faced different kinds of pressures: those of technology and an ever shrinking world. Motor vehicles have dramatically closed distances, luring more people into Alice Springs. The influence of alcohol has spread with them. In 1987 television began broadcasting into remote communities across Australia. Today, even the smallest outstations have satellite dishes and telephones. While this has brought many advantages to the Arrernte people, it also threatens their language and lifestyle as never before: young people are beginning to yearn for the glamour of Hollywood.

There is a growing concern among the Arrernte communities that children are growing up without learning their language and culture; that they do not know their dreaming stories and their responsibilities to their country and their families; that the distractions of fashions and pressure to fit in are resulting in a generation lost between two languages yet competent in neither; that, despite bilingual programmes, outstation schooling, trained Arrernte teachers, and independent, Aborigine controlled and run schools, the Western educational system is not meeting their needs and is failing their children.

The Intelyape-lyape Akaltye project is an attempt by Arrernte families and communities to combat this by writing their own early childhood curriculum, defining their culture for themselves and then teaching it to their children. Work with three very different schools and school communities, showed – significantly – that all identified the same three core subject

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areas for their curriculum: language, health and family. The first two are obvious. But the relevance of family cannot be appreciated without some understanding of the importance of kinship to Arrernte people: changes to traditional family relationships and values threaten the core of their culture.

Batchelor College programs emphasise a process of "both ways" education through which the Western academic traditions and the traditions of Aboriginal knowledge and education come together to ensure that students are equipped to operate in both cultural contexts.

Programs are implemented either through full time on-campus studies or through "mixed-mode" studies where students are based for a large part of their time in home communities and receive tuition from lecturers or tutors based in or visiting their communities.

Batchelor college, Australia, offers adult education courses designed to ensure that the Aboriginal culture is re-established. With Foundation support it is currently developing a teacher training course in early childhood education

The family strand, as identified by these three communities, will teach Arrernte kinship names and the skin system; will relate children back to their countries, back to the lands they were once part of; will teach them the religious ceremonies, dreamings, dances, songs, stories and paintings associated with their land. Through responsibilities to the land and the family, it will teach about authority and the law; and it is hoped that it will influence children's behaviour, re-establishing traditional values of cooperation, sharing and respect.

The greatest single threat to the family in Arrernte society today is alcohol abuse. Aboriginal people have been discriminated against and given marginal status by the dominant society. Alcohol is a means to cope with both personal feelings and the wider society's prejudices. The Intelyape-lyape Akaltye project is developing alcohol education materials for much younger children than the materials currently used are designed for. They have an emphasis on promoting self-identity as an Arrernte person, increasing self-esteem, alternative means of self-expression, and survival strategies for children when they do confront the problems. They particularly focus on cultural, family and individual strengths in order to counter images portrayed by the wider society.

The communities see a strong need to have more Arrernte people visiting and working in schools; to have old people and elders to tell stories and reinforce language; for women to take girls looking for bush tucker (wild food); for men to take boys hunting; for trips to homelands to learn about dreamings and responsibilities; for people to teach traditional skills, dancing, bush medicines and contemporary art skills; and for Arrernte people from Aboriginal organisations to teach about health and alcohol related issues. ⌟

The changing family structure

Thriving against the odds

Changes in family structures – among many other life events and circumstances – often appear to militate against the well-being of young children and their development. Yet children manage to thrive in the most difficult conditions, even when they are deprived of the benefits that their families are expected to uniquely offer. This article offers a discussion of the phenomenon, drawn from recent research. It also suggests some implications for intervention programmes with families.

In recent years, research has produced a body of knowledge about children who thrive in spite of adverse circumstances. The questions raised by this research are: 'What is it that some children have that enables them to not just survive but to develop normally in spite of poverty, violence, traumatic migration or other potentially damaging phenomena?' and 'Why is it that some children do better than others in similarly disadvantaged situations?'

Some terms and their meanings

The terms used in this field are 'positive deviance', 'vulnerability and invulnerability' and 'resilience'. They describe what it is that allows children to remain competent despite exposure to stressful life experiences.

'Positive deviance' has been used by Zetlin, Ghassemi and Mansour to describe performance (especially in health, growth and development) of certain children compared to that of other children in the community and/or the family. They describe it as the ability to adapt socially and physiologically to nutritional stress.[1]

'Vulnerability', as used in psychological research, relates to children's difficulties in recovering from the damage caused by an adverse situation.[2] 'Invulnerability' relates to suffering no apparent damage from such a situation. Most of this research has been concerned with the identification of biological and genetic factors.

'Resilience' is borrowed from physics. It refers to the capacity of a body to recover its original form, once distorting pressures are removed. The term seems appropriate when it is used to describe children's ability to bounce back from adversity.[3] But even resilience may not be an adequate term because some children cope with continuous stress without apparent damage: 'bouncing back' is not involved.

Resilience in practice

Recent studies have claimed correlations between resilience and such factors as children's personal attributes, their life events and their socio-demographic characteristics. And further studies have revealed that these variables could affect outcomes in three different ways:

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- first, each may behave as a **compensatory** factor if it supports the competencies which have been affected by stress;
- second, each may behave as a **protective** factor in those cases where individuals are unaffected by – or even do better under – stressful conditions;
- third, each may behave as a **vulnerability** factor when, instead of having a protective effect, they make children more susceptible to stress.

One of these studies was conducted by Luther (1990)[3], who examined variables which promote resilience among 114 inner-city ninth-grade students. This explored the relation between some personal attributes of children and satisfactory social performance as rated by parents, teachers or peers. The attributes examined were intelligence, locus of control (defined as having faith in one's own control over the environment), social skills, and ego development. The results of this study illustrate correlations between such factors and children's social competencies in specific social situations.

Intelligence was found to be a vulnerability factor. Under high stress children with a high intelligence quotient (IQ) were found to perform in school similarly to those with low IQ. An explanation for this has been suggested by other studies[5] which claim that children with high IQs may be more susceptible to stress given that they are more aware of, and sensitive to, their environments.

Locus of control was found to be a protective factor in relation to performance in classroom activities. Social skills – such as expressiveness – were also found to be a protective factor against stress, when competence was defined in terms of the child's popularity with peers.

Ego development refers to character formation, itself a combination of cognitive and interpersonal development. It was found to be a compensatory factor in relation to school grade, classroom assertiveness, and classroom disruptiveness.

Is my family changing? Yes it is

My family structure is changing. The reasons for this are a little vague. I'm not sure whether it's normal evolution or a combination of changing values based on modern standards.

I believe there is an ideal family structure. For me it would be to have the grandparents involved as much as humanly possible. With much interactivity between the three units of the family – grandparents, parents and children – I feel that there is always a tendency to respect the 'elder lemons'. This respect is very desirable and inculcates a positive Christian outlook in all concerned. The children, through their dealings with the grandparents, learn the gentleness, love, and patience that may not always be available from their parents.

Seán McCarthy
Togher pre-school and family centre, Ireland

Positive life events and resilience

Positive life events also correlate to resilience. Research[6] had claimed that positive life events are a protective factor since they both help individuals to cope with stress, and counteract effects of negative events.[7] However, in Luther's study, positive life events were found to be a vulnerability factor. The author speculates that, when positive life events are infrequent interruptions in a chain of negative events, children see the environment as powerful and unpredictable. Because of this, their confidence in their locus of control is diminished.

On the other hand, several studies[8] have established positive correlations between socio-demographic factors – such as poor socio-economic status, parental divorce, minority group membership and family size – and resilience.

Resilience and intervention

Research has also shown that resilience can be promoted by supportive and stimulating caregivers, and by stability in children's environments. It is also noted that not all children are born resilient, but can become so if certain conditions are met. It seems, therefore, that intervention to develop and support those compensatory and protective factors positively associated with resilience is likely to be useful when children are under stress. The ways in which this can be related to the field of early childhood development has still to be thoroughly explored.

However, it must be remembered that, although resilience is the result of interrelated environmental factors and of the ways in which children process the influences of such factors, genetic considerations may also contribute to determining how each child uniquely responds. ⌟

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Teenage parents

These notes seek only to indicate some of the complexities of teenage parenting in the context of changing family structures. Most of them are drawn from a paper prepared by Willem van der Eyken following a consultation process with a number of Foundation-supported projects mostly from the Caribbean and with people experienced in the field of teenage parenting. Part of that consultative process took the form of a three day workshop held in cooperation with SERVOL (Service Volunteered for All), Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Teenage parenting is increasing in many countries and is perceived as a problem, particularly for poorer families and more so when traditional extended family support systems no longer exist.

In many countries there is also clear evidence that young mothers are often left to head the new family; and that, when this happens, poverty is a likely consequence. In the USA, for example, 77.9 per cent of lone parent families headed by females under 25 years of age are in poverty.[1]

In terms of changing family structures, it is clear that teenage parenting can impact in two broad ways: first, the mother may stay within her own family. In this case she adds a new generation to the home but also a new mouth to be fed. She assumes a new role – mother – but may not be able to maintain others – market trader, for example.

Second, she may elect to set up home, perhaps. In that case she changes the structure of her family home by leaving, and simultaneously establishes a new one: her new family. However, although this is seperate from her family home, it may well not be independent: it may continue to adversely affect her original family emotionally, financially and structurally.

Equally, independent or not, it will evolve its own structure. But may start out from a fragile emotional base, may be on an unsound financial footing and may face a problem-packed future. In short, its structure may be determined by complex circumstances, rather than by reference to any ideal.

'Adults disagree about the nature of the teenage pregnancy problem. Some see it as primarily a moral problem; others as an economic or poverty problem. Some are concerned because of its implications for family development, infant mortality and health outcomes; others because it contributes to school dropout and dependency.
There is just as much disagreement about solutions. Some see the problem only as an issue of sex education and family planning, others as a problem requiring comprehensive and longterm education and economic solutions. Some think it is just a parental responsibility; others believe that a broad partnership between family, community institutions and government will be necessary to set our young children on the right path.'[2]

From the United States come ideas for prevention: 'Providing practical on the spot services, information and advice in an acceptable way to teenagers were obviously important preventive components of both programmes. Yet one of the key research findings was that teenagers need to feel cared for.'[3]

In Jamaica, programmes for teenage mothers are based on being 'cognisant of the need of teenage mothers for training in the educare of their children, of the need to involve other household mothers in the training, of the need for a stimulating environment in the early years of the child and of the need for a holistic approach to the development of mother and child.'[4]

In Jamaica, where the age of consent was recently raised from 14 to 16 'it is not unusual to find several cases of girls aged 16 to 17 who are mothering their third or fourth child'.[5] In a 1989 household survey of over 6,000 women aged 14 to 49, some 16 per cent said that they began sexual activity before the age of 15 and 37 per cent had at least one child while still in their teens.[6] It has also been reported that 'most teenage mothers ... lack educational opportunities and are unaware of how pregnancy occurs and ways to prevent it. In addition, these girls are single mothers who get little or no support from the fathers of their children. Furthermore, many are in a vulnerable situation characterised by neglect, physical and emotional abuse.'[7]

A study in Dominica concluded: 'In the family and society in which she belongs, the childmother has to face many conflicts and contradictions: sexual maturation processes and the development of her own identity; economic difficulties, with the newborn imposing an additional burden on meagre family income; educational restrictions and limited labour opportunities; high risk associated with pregnancy in young women; uncertainty about the future; and rejection and abandonment by family. Under these circumstances, the combination of economic, social, psychological, emotional and cultural elements place the young, single mother of poor families at risk of becoming a victim and a reproducer of abandonment and aggression.'[8]

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Book review

Changing Family Life in East Africa: Women and Children at Risk

Philip Leroy Kilbride & Janet Capriotti Kilbride.
Pennsylvania State University Press, USA 1990
ISBN 0-271-00676-5

This review by Gerry Salole originally appeared in the *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, October 1993 in slightly longer form. It is reprinted here by kind permission of the publishers

This is not a book for the casual reader or for those allergic to sociological inspeak. Nor is the book's message reassuring since Kilbride and Kilbride offer a bleak prognosis of the risks that women and children increasingly face in modern East African Society; and offer impractical and weak conclusions on how to redress the problems they so convincingly characterise.

Kilbride and Kilbride are social anthropologists with more than 20 years contact with the same communities in Uganda and Kenya and they have produced here a very solid, if turgid, contribution to understanding the current predicament of the African Child and Woman. The book has significance for anthropological theory as well as for the development worker engaged in working with women and children in modern Africa and is strongly recommended.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first the authors describe their theoretical orientation and also posit their hypothesis of delocalisation (the process whereby old village-based agrarian economies become incorporated into, and dependent upon, the modern national and international economies), outlining the particular predicament and increasing vulnerability of women and children in this process. For the authors, modernisation has produced a move from a 'genuine' culture towards a 'spurious' one and their intent is to show that 'moral erosion' is threatening children with child abuse and neglect in a hostile modern environment where the extended family is under siege.

In the second part of the book the authors offer a few examples of pregnancy, child rearing and childhood experiences. Given the Kilbrides' undoubted rich ethnographic experience, this section is disappointingly short and does not offer the rich variety of experiences that the preface would have the reader expect. However, they are especially successful in depicting the socialisation of the young and in passionately defending the importance of mothering and affective experiences. In particular there are valuable discussions of birth and infant mortality, the infant's home environment, clothing, food practices, infant care practices, and a fascinating discussion of comparative infant sensorimotor development.

The third part is the 'meat' of the book. Here the authors describe the role that industrialisation, nationalism, missionary activity, formal education and a monetised economy are playing on marriage and family life; and argue that the process of cultural and moral delocalisation is now well underway. This section begins with the increasing powerlessness of women, especially the predicament of the bar girl in Kampala. It then dwells on the alarming phenomenon of pre-marital pregnancy and the challenge it poses to the extended family. A very pertinent discussion on the role of grandparents in relation to their grandchildren is included, as is another on the increasingly precarious role of the extended family in modern marriages.

The Kilbrides then successfully depict the increasing strain and friction within polygamous homes – particularly for women and children – and the moral disorientation which now surrounds polygamous marriages in modern East Africa.

The penultimate chapter of the book focuses expertly on the issue of child abuse and neglect, and the book concludes with a summary chapter on women and children at risk.

The Kilbrides propose that a solution to the problems they have described resides in an acknowledgment of three basic principles:

- that power differentials between individuals, social groups and nations exist and that those with this power have a responsibility that comes with such influence;
- that all action to redress the problems should be intra- and cross-cultural; and
- that a universal perspective must be an integral part of any resolution.

Their specific conclusion is that there must be a 'convergence of interpretative frameworks' and that socio-economics, feminist theory and child centered ideology should be combined and harnessed to resolve the problem. For the Kilbrides the answer lies in a 'locally derived child-centered Africanity'. Unfortunately, this tantalizing idea is never satisfactorily explored and is only articulated through the partial reporting of newspaper editorials.

There are moreover – inevitably in a book of such scope – some glaring omissions. One searches in vain, for example, for a more profound insight into the coping mechanisms for single mothers that are presumably currently evolving in the urban context; or, even more crucially, for more than a cursory mention of the implications of AIDS on the situation of children – especially in Uganda.

However, this book is highly recommended reading, especially for those interested in grappling with the difficulties and complications that beseige the African family; and the enormous and growing threat that African children are currently confronted with. The most important aspect of the book is the welcome and unequivocal importance that the book gives to a child-centred perspective which encompasses all aspects of what we normally think of as development work. ❑

Network news

Argentina and Brazil: databanks on child development

Staff members of the *Cruz del Sur* project from Argentina and the *Criança Rural* project from Brazil visited the Inter American Children's Institute in Montevideo, Uruguay, which has an extensive database on children's issues. The purpose of their visit was to gain technical knowledge on the storing and coordination of information on early childhood, and the type of information to be gathered. *Criança Rural* is working on setting up and running a national data base in Brazil based at the Federal University of Santa Maria. In Argentina, the *Cruz del Sur* project is planning to set up the country's first documentation centre on early childhood, and may at a later stage also establish a database. *Cruz del Sur* works through three demonstration centres for learning and teaching to improve the child care skills and knowledge of para-professional community mothers.

above: Pastoral da Criança reaches children in isolated rural areas in Brazil

Brazil: the situation of the child in Latin America

An international conference was held in July, in Recife, Brazil, on the situation of children and youth living in poverty in Latin America. Among the participants were members of Foundation-supported projects from Brazil, Peru, Chile, and Argentina. After the conference they took the opportunity to visit sites where the Foundation-supported *Pastoral da Criança* project operates. Issues discussed during the seven-day field visit included alternative programmes for children under six years in rural areas; successful strategies in implementing non-formal programmes; the development of community-based services for young children in Brazil; training of para-professionals; and parent education in rural communities. One day was also spent discussing the early childhood database mentioned above. The *Pastoral da Criança* project works through Catholic community organisations to train community leaders in health care and child development work. It also develops materials and radio programmes to back up its work.

Israel: beating corporal punishment

With support from the Foundation, the National Council for the Child (NCC) is translating its publication 'Raising children without violence' from Hebrew into Arabic, so as to reach a larger audience in Israel. This booklet will form part of a campaign that NCC is running against the use of corporal punishment. Anecdotal evidence in Israel suggests that 80 per cent of the population were smacked as children and expect to smack their own children. This figure is comparable to those in the USA and Scandinavia. Over three years NCC hopes to raise the level of awareness among parents, children and professionals about the dangers of corporal punishment for children. It will also present non-physical, effective alternatives to corporal punishment. NCC has the support of the Ministry of Health in its campaign, and one of its staff members has appeared on Arabic-language television recently to discuss the subject of raising children without violence.

Kenya: conference on the under-threes

Nyeri, Kenya, will be the venue of a conference in October on the needs and care of the under-threes organised by the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE). The conference, sponsored by UNICEF, will be attended by policy makers, academics, researchers, technical staff and fieldworkers. These participants will represent various ministries, local government, the Office of the President, and national and international NGOs. Much of NACECE's work is focused on training pre-school teachers and trainers in the places where they work. Other activities include providing resources and materials for community-run pre-schools, encouraging research and evaluation activities, and helping develop teaching methods set in the context of different cultures.

Kenya: video wins international prize

In November 1992 the Kenya Institute of Education's (KIE) video 'Concerns for health in pre-schools' was entered for the Japan Prize International Educational Programme Contest. The Contest's purpose is to assist in advancing educational broadcast programmes throughout the world and to contribute to promoting understanding and cooperation between nations. Eighty seven nations participated in the November Contest. KIE's video, which is about the role that pre-schools and the home can play in improving the health and nutritional status of children, won the UNICEF prize in the Contest. This prize is awarded to the most outstanding programme on the life and social environment of children in developing nations. The video was produced with the cooperation of NACECE.

Namibia: forthcoming workshop

A workshop is being organised in December in Namibia on alternatives to centre-based early child-

hood care. Though the workshop is being organised by two Foundation-supported projects – the Namibian child development network, and the FCW outreach project in South Africa – organisations outside the network of Foundation-supported projects will also be represented. The Children's Desk of the Council of Churches in Namibia, which runs the child development network, works towards developing a training and resource network for early childhood workers and trainers to strengthen community services for young children. The Western Cape Foundation for Community Work (FCW) in South Africa runs an innovative home-visiting programme in the townships and suburbs of Cape Town.

right: encouraging children to spread their wings in Cape Town, South Africa. Photo: from FCW's publication Growing with children

Tunisia: an education programme for NGOs

The leaders of three Foundation-supported projects in Malaysia, Guatemala and Mozambique will be attending a course for NGO leaders in Hammamet, Tunisia, later this year. The three month course focuses on the identity, philosophy and strategy of NGOs, and includes field visits. Since 1992 *El Taller*, an NGO platform for encouraging dialogue between the North and the South, has been running three-month courses on capacity building in NGO-management. By training project leaders in management skills *El Taller* equips NGOs to face new challenges and play new roles in a rapidly changing world. *El Taller* offers a space for discussion, debate and exchange of experience and ideas to NGOs all over the world.

Further information can be obtained from: The Education Unit, *El Taller*, B.P. 137, 1002 Tunis-Belvédère, Tunisia. Tel: 216.1.752457/752057. Fax: 216.1.751570.

UK: finding out about oneself

below: children learn about life through early childhood care, 123 House, Belfast, Northern Ireland

For the past year, the Foundation has been supporting the Scottish Network Family Policy Resources Unit in Scotland, UK. This project is creating a national network of organisations that work in the field of early childhood. Among its activities, the Network organises workshops, seminars and conferences for a wide variety of non-governmental and public agencies. In May it organised a seminar for various Scottish and other UK agencies in order to improve cooperation. The Network invited comments and suggestions on what a national network could be, what it could do, and how it could support and enhance the work in early child care in Scotland. The Network is working towards linking together a range of agencies so as to more efficiently use scarce resources and influence policy makers.

USA: fellowship for grassroots work

The Mary I. Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College, Harvard University, has awarded Mary Lassen, director of the Foundation-supported Committee for Boston Public Housing project, a year-long fellowship. This award was instituted to support women active in research and grassroots work. The award will enable Mary Lassen to take a year's leave of absence from September for reflecting and writing. The Boston project works with tenants of public housing developments in the city of Boston, to establish basic family support services. These include the creation of community centres and child care facilities. The project is also working on disseminating its methodologies, and advocating on issues such as community organisation and child care. ⌟

Ireland: regional workshop for the 'Celtic Fringe'

The first workshop for Foundation-supported projects in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the Scottish Western Isles – the self-styled Celtic Fringe – was held in Galway, Ireland in June. It was attended by representatives from Togher Pre-school, Cork; Connemara Project, Galway (both from Ireland); 123 House, Belfast (Northern Ireland); Cynon Valley (Wales); and Gu:h Nam Parant, Western Isles (Scotland). Keynote presentations were made by representatives from three other Foundation-supported projects: Young Families Now; Scottish Network – Family Policy Resources; and Partnership in Education. Topics covered included: team building and staff development; evaluation and monitoring; promotion, advocacy and public relations; and fundraising – all had been elected by members of the projects. There was also time for an exchange of materials, including videos, reports, slides and publications. This was organised formally during one evening, and centred on an exhibition. One of the most valuable outcomes of the workshop was its evaluation by participants. While this agreed on the vital importance of such workshops for projects working in isolated areas, it also resulted in a suggestion for a more flexible approach to workshop content in future: that workshops should start formally but then develop according to their own dynamics. This could make them much more responsive to project needs – for example, by allowing some topics to be more profoundly explored at the expense of others; or by allowing new topics to be introduced as appropriate.

States of the practice: a survey from Latin America

REDUC (Red Latinoamericana de Información y Documentación en Educación - the Latin American Network of Information and Documentation in Education) is an information and documentation network about educational issues for Latin America and the Caribbean. Based in Santiago, Chile, it operates through 27 associated centres throughout the region, and already has an extensive database of research and project documentation in the field of education.

The illustrations in this article have been taken from the report from Mexico *Del hecho al dicho hay menos trecho* (The distance from deed to word is shorter).

right: the signboard reads 'towards whatever you want (and only there)'

In 1991 REDUC, with Foundation support, began a new project entitled 'Dissemination of innovative practice in early childhood care and education in Latin America'. This two-year project sought to incorporate early childhood into REDUC's work, and began collecting data on innovative early childhood development practices in the non-formal sector in five Latin American countries. This information would then be disseminated through the REDUC-network to researchers and policy makers. The five countries in which data was to be collected were Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. These countries were selected because of their variety in size; because they were able to undertake the work; and because they provide an interesting mix of resources, including universities, non-governmental organisations, research institutes and government agencies. This project lasted two years, and included a planning phase of two months.

Short term objectives

The short-term objectives of this project were to enrich REDUC's extensive database by incorporating information on practical, field-based experiences in early childhood development, and to develop a methodology for obtaining information on practical experiences. The long term objectives were to improve the quality of programmes and policy making in early childhood issues in Latin America, and to bridge the gap between practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Information was collected on a specific theme in each country, and a coordinator was appointed in each of the five countries to undertake the data collection. They came together for a planning meeting in Chile to select themes, and to discuss the criteria for 'innovative' work in each country.

Each coordinator carried out her task in different ways and in different circumstances. For example, in Mexico the emphasis was on planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating efforts in early childhood care. Forty family support programmes in both rural and urban areas throughout the country were studied. In Chile 10 training projects were documented, and the author concentrated on training, internal organisation, and lessons drawn from practical training experience. Information in Peru was gathered about nine projects and focused on methodology, coverage and replicability; while in Nicaragua it centred on the situations of 1,500 children living in two markets in Managua, the main problems that they faced and the work that various organisations were doing to improve the situation. In Guatemala the data was drawn from the discussions at a national seminar in which 41 relevant organisations participated, and on a project operating in 248 centres financed by official bodies.

Conclusions drawn

After all the data had been gathered and collated, the coordinators attended an evaluation meeting in Mexico to finalise plans for a comparative study which was to be carried out by REDUC. The five coordinators reported that the process of gathering information had been a valuable learning experience. They reached many interesting conclusions, finding that:

- a successful approach towards child development is one in which existing service providers and organisations working in this area are brought together;
- objectives should always be based on the needs felt and expressed by the community, and should be divided into short, medium and long-term objectives;
- self-sustainability of quality early childhood development centres run by poor communities is a myth;

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- short and frequent training meetings have more impact than long occasional workshops;
- 10 to 13 year old children can act as change agents within the family and the community;
- *educadoras*, whether professional or para-professional, should be considered as autonomous professionals capable of identifying needs, and of designing, implementing and evaluating strategies;

above: it is usually the women who become involved in most health and education programmes aimed at families

- training should build on earlier experience and be continuous and systematic;
- evaluation, which is often neglected, should be done regularly and systematically.

The largely descriptive information was published separately then formed the basis of an analytical and comparative study entitled *Cosechando Experiencias* (Harvesting Experiences). The study describes and analyses the process of producing states of practice in general, and describes the documents produced and the individual processes carried out in each country. By distributing it through its database and network, REDUC hopes that the study may become available to policy makers throughout the region.

REDUC found that, given the experimental nature of the project, the process of data gathering was a good learning opportunity. Problems, of course, were encountered. It was, for example, difficult to contrast lessons learned from practice with those from research and policy making. In some of the countries the data gathering proved difficult because the themes chosen were too broad. In other countries, the information was considered very useful for practitioners, researchers and policy makers. This was especially so when some of the information focused on family support projects, and in-service training.

However, REDUC found that the process which the group followed in order to create the state of practice was just as important as the final product. Together with the coordinators, it identified some important steps that would ensure success during the preparation period – the key in determining the development of the project. These steps included a series of meetings during which a clear definition of the thematic focus, and a clarification of procedures were outlined. It was decided to systematically record all information gathered for a preliminary draft document which could be complemented by interviews and other documents.

As well as informing policy makers throughout the region, the project's findings are useful for other individuals and organisations as a reference for determining their own state of practice, and for extracting lessons, and reflecting on experiences.

The comparative study, entitled *Cosechando experiencias: producción de estados de la practica en educación inicial en cinco paises latinoamericanos*, is only available in the Spanish language. Further information: REDUC, Erasmo Escala 1825, Santiago, Chile. ⌟

Report from the field

Step by step

Chasia Levin

Chasia Levin is the Director of the Beit Yisrael Project, run by the Association for the Advancement of the Ethiopian Family and Child in Israel, in Beer Sheva. She explains how the Project made a video about some of the women associated with it. The project develops programmes to help immigrant Ethiopians integrate into Israeli society and prepare their children for the future, and trains para-professionals to implement activities such as home visiting services, parent education and health education programmes.

Trying to plan the making of a video about the Association's project for Ethiopian immigrants was very difficult because we needed a central theme which would tie together its many activities, for example the mothers and infants morning groups, children's after-school enrichment groups, parents evening groups, health education, and home visiting. It was especially important to explain our Project's unique philosophy and key principle of selecting people from among the Ethiopian women in the immigrant community and training them to become para-professional workers in the various programmes.

In the end, we decided that following the personal stories of a few of these women was the best way to create a logical path to explain all the aspects of our Project. This choice was also influenced by the fact that the film was made as a joint effort with the Association of University Women, in which it planned to feature women in leadership roles. The Association of University Women aims at increasing educational opportunities for girls and women for their personal development and for the benefit of society. One of its activities is to enable immigrant women, through education, to become active on the labour market. Its point of view helped

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our Association see our own para-professional women from a different perspective – as the real 'stars' in the story of our Project. These Ethiopian para-professionals, selected for training from earlier waves of immigration, work in the Project's early childhood education, health education, and related family community work programmes, and also serve as role models for newcomers who must bridge the gap between the world from which they came and the world they must adopt.

The film company's writer had prepared a preliminary outline for a documentary study of the Project. However, after several meetings and discussions with the programme coordinators and myself, the film director and her team spent many days with our Project staff, visiting and observing the programmes, and getting acquainted with the para-professionals. The proposed 'shooting script' was modified many times according to greater understanding of our work by the film director as the script and filming preparations went on.

Involving the programme coordinators

The Project's professional programme coordinators were an integral part of the film team throughout the entire process. Their involvement in each step was essential to capture the most typical and representative moments of each subject filmed. Scheduling and advance preparation for filming in the geographically dispersed project sites were handled throughout by the Project staff and the programme coordinators in each immigrant caravan centre or housing complex. This preparation phase took three months.

By using a technique combining running narration with voice-over interviews, which were made with many of the para-professional workers, it was possible to select the best interview material to match the script. Expert editing combined it all together. Those interviewed did not have to feel shy or embarrassed by speaking directly to the camera. Their voices describe their feelings and ideas as the camera shows scenes illustrating each para-professional's work and responsibilities in the programmes. To help overcome any apprehension, all the people interviewed were promised that they would see the rough cut of the film before it was finalised, and that they could veto anything that they were not comfortable with.

Every interview and filmed segment was, of course, much longer than they appear in the video; and, while actual filming took only a few days, the editing of the film took several months. The film editor included only the best material, and the editing was also supervised by the Project's professional programme coordinators. When the rough cut was ready, the Project rented a van, and brought all those involved in the film from Beer-Sheva to a studio in Tel-Aviv to view the results. Everyone was delighted with the 'big show', and no-one wanted to veto anything.

The end result

The video which resulted is a sensitive documentary study of Ethiopian immigrant women in cultural and social transition. It follows the passage of several of these women from a background of simple agricultural village life to a growing competence in their work as para-professionals, working within their own Ethiopian community as it struggles to adjust to modern Israeli society. The dilemma of the loss of traditional authority by Ethiopian fathers and elders is also documented, through the eyes of a young male community worker who conducts evening discussion meetings with fathers. The film shows how the Project's philosophy encourages respect for the rich Ethiopian cultural heritage, promoting a strengthened sense of community identity and self-worth for the parents and children undergoing drastic transitional changes in their traditional roles.

The film is called *Step by step*, is in English and runs for 30 minutes. It costs US$25 and can be obtained from The Association for the Advancement of the Ethiopian Family and Child in Israel, P.O. Box 5668, Beer-Sheva 84466, Israel. Tel: 972.57.411576, Fax: 972.57.431042. ⌟

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The use of materials in a malaria campaign

Silvia Mazo

This article is based on a report by Silvia Mazo who works for CINDE in Colombia, which specialises in producing educational and developmental materials. In this article she tells of the experience that CINDE's PROMESA Programme, which previously received Foundation support, had in developing materials, and of the central role that these had in the process of dealing with malaria in the province of Choco.

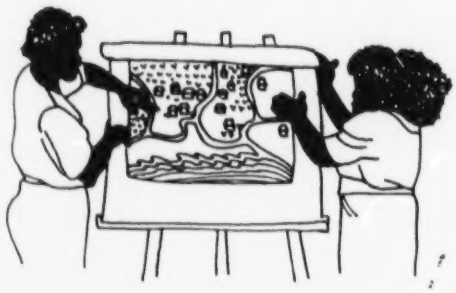
Malaria had been a major health problem in Choco long before the PROMESA programme began working there in 1978. The region's low altitude, humidity, and wooden houses built on stilts, often above stagnant water, exacerbate the problem. In the mid-1980s CINDE initiated a programme to combat malaria. It involved three approaches: first, training *promotoras* to use a microscope to analyse blood samples, diagnose the type of malaria, and choose appropriate medication – these women were called *microscopistas;* second, developing materials about the disease, its diagnosis and treatment; and third, working with the *Servicio Nacional de Erradicación de la Malaria* (National Service for the Eradication of Malaria) to fumigate the area.

However, despite these efforts, the incidence of malaria did not decrease substantially. The *promotoras* complained that they could not work with the materials, which were designed in other areas and showed people whose settings did not correspond to their own. The Programme decided to run materials development workshops in each of the 23 communities with which it worked. During the workshops the *promotoras* designed their own leaflets and posters, made puppets from waste materials, and wrote stories for puppet shows. They then invited their communities to an exhibition of their materials. This helped to disseminate ideas, and motivate other community members to fight against malaria.

Children became active in the communities gathering information about malaria. They interviewed families to find out attitudes, knowledge and local practices, then analysed the data and presented the results to their communities. They drew maps of places where water collected, and where pineapple plants grew – the water that collects between the leaves is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Each community then organised a 'prevention month' during which stagnant water was drained, pineapple leaves cut, hazardous areas fumigated, and people consulted the *microscopistas.* During these campaigns the people saw their own materials displayed in the streets, and became highly motivated.

The process of materials development became essential in the community's efforts to find solutions to their health problems. It became –

- **an aid in analysis:** enabling the communities to see where mosquitoes breed, and to visualise the scale of the problem;
- **a tool for reflection:** enabling the communities to reflect on their situation, customs and needs. Though modern medicine treats the illness itself, traditional remedies relieve the discomfort that accompanies malaria;
- **an aid to planning:** stimulating the communities to organise activities. Posters announced the campaign's progress, and charts enabled the communities to see the reduction in the cases of malaria;



right: sketching a map of the village and the likely places where mosquitoes could breed helped the communities to visually identify the problem areas. This drawing is taken from Silvia Mazo's report

- **a mechanism of achieving cohesion:** stimulating people to work together towards a common cause;
- **a means of promoting cooperation between institutions:** the communities invited local authorities to study their materials, thus creating awareness about the problems and receiving help in eradicating malaria;
- **a stronghold in the campaign:** enabling the communities to produce back-up materials with new information;
- **an evaluation tool:** enabling children to gather information, so that the communities could analyse their needs, and develop a questionnaire to evaluate their communities' attitudes, knowledge and practices;
- **a tool to control malaria:** as the communities began keeping records of the cases and types of malaria, so that the children could design charts to visually show the campaign's progress;
- **an element in eradicating malaria:** as the communities' desire to develop their own materials made them reflect and search for ways of solving their problems;
- **a mechanism for community integration:** enabling the communities to become aware of the children's potential as community leaders and agents in change, and bringing together different groups in the community.

The method of a community developing its own materials in an effort to work together to find solutions to its problems can be applied universally, and in many other fields than health care. Its advantage is that in areas of scarce resources the emphasis in this process is on preventative rather than curative solutions, and can therefore be more economically realistic. ❑

You don't have to be a professional to work with families

The Foundation will soon be publishing another paper in its series Studies and Evaluation papers. The paper, *Selecting and training community promoters in Latin America*, (Studies and Evaluation Paper 13) by Jani Brouwer and Sergio Martinic, reflects on the benefits of working with promoters and raises some of the difficult issues that need to be addressed. These include whether to pay or compensate promoters, the relationship between promoters and regular professional or technical staff; and the dichotomy or tension that sometimes exists between the needs and views of the community and the views and objectives of the organisation that has engaged the promoter. It also examines the criteria for selecting promoters and highlights some training strategies used by education programmes in Latin America.

These extracts look at the arguments for and against working with promoters as opposed to working with professionals, and consider the question of payment.

You don't have to be a professional to work with families, the main thing is to have a good temper, to be patient, to love them.
– a promoter in Peru

Promoters have worked in education projects throughout Latin America for some time. In most countries, the main reason for involving promoters was one of economics as the projects in which they were involved were usually less expensive to implement, and often had better results. Emphasis is placed on the values that a promoter should have, such as showing solidarity; being resourceful, conscientious, and democratic; and being a good teamworker. Because promoters are selected from the community itself and share the social and cultural surroundings of the people involved in the programmes, they are more likely to understand the community's needs. This allows a programme to be more easily established in a community, enhances interaction, and facilitates continuity and sustainability.

Programmes involving community promoters make extensive use of the knowledge that people have gained from their own experience – knowledge which can sometimes be overlooked or undervalued by professionals. This does not deny the value of outside expertise. Although professionals may have adequate technical skills, they often lack the educational and social know-how needed to work at a grassroots level. It is not easy for them to achieve a genuine cultural union with community members.

Most popular education projects involve promoters who have specific skills and knowledge and who help groups to express themselves and coordinate their actions. In many cases, they become community leaders. When organisations expect the promoters to be committed to the interests of the community as a whole, not just to their own target group, they regard promoters as mediators for their workplans, and encourage them to participate in planning. They allow promoters to negotiate or reformulate a project's goals, contents and procedures in relation to their community's interests.

The question of payment

The issue of whether to pay promoters is controversial. Paying promoters can erode their 'mystique' and introduce a divisive factor of power relationships in a community. Payment can be seen as interfering with the promoters' ability to act as leaders, and as making them dependent on the institution that implements a programme. Others feel that paying promoters is only ethical, since theirs is specialised and time-consuming work.

Paying promoters may distort existing relationships as a promoter's involvement is considered a social service and commitment, rather than an ordinary work contract. It can be argued that paying a promoter inevitably leads to conflicts. Tensions can arise among other members of the community, caused by the desire to have access to a new source of income. Similarly, promoters may try to hold on to their position. It is then difficult to gauge whether they have a commitment to the community or simply a financial need.

Some programmes try to deal with this situation by reimbursing the basic expenses of promoters, and in some cases, providing symbolic rewards for their work. Transportation costs, free supplies for the workshops they participate in, or an expense allowance are some of the methods used to reimburse promoters. Indirect payment is another method, for example, paying study fees to allow promoters to pursue technical or vocational training.

Conclusions

Promoters have made a crucial contribution to implementing strategies for education and development. However, they still face dilemmas over the extent to which their primary relationship is with the community or with the external body that operates development programmes; and whether their work should be considered voluntary or should be rewarded financially.

The issue of whether to pay promoters is unlikely to be resolved easily. Payment can be seen as interfering with the promoters' ability to act as leaders, and destroying their independence from the institution that implements a programme. On the other hand, as promoters are expected to devote time to carrying out the tasks that they have been trained to do, they should be paid. If an institution decides to pay its promoters, the next question is: who should finance these costs, and how can this expense be covered in the future?

Dear Reader,

What is advocacy? Who should be advocating? Why advocate? How do you go about advocating? Who is advocacy directed at? What problems have you encountered? What successful techniques have you developed?

In the April 1994 issue of the Newsletter we will be looking at advocacy in the field of early childhood development. If you would like to contribute, please write to use by the end of January.

Communications Section, Bernard van Leer Foundation, PO Box 82334, 2508 EH The Hague, The Netherlands

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Playthemes

Road safety for children

The National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE), based at the Kenya Institute of Education in Nairobi, Kenya, coordinates and supports early childhood teams throughout the country. Through district centres NACECE provides training for pre-school teachers and trainers; develops culturally related curricula; and tries to involve parents in all pre-school matters.

There are so many things that threaten the lives of young children: poverty, disease, violence, hunger, natural disasters. There are also cars. Road accidents claim thousands of lives every year, in rural as well as in urban areas. Young children should be made aware of the hazards of the road.

In Kenya NACECE has devised a fun way of teaching children about road safety. NACECE has made a pack of four card games which it calls Snap, Fishing, Lotto and Domino. Each game has different rules of play, and all of them have one side of the card illustrated with road signs, vehicles, traffic police, or children. As children play with the cards – matching similar cards, or using their memory to find the same cards – they learn about the rules and dangers of the road, and how to take care of themselves, their brothers and sisters and friends. Using these cards also stimulates discussion between adults or older children and younger children.

Making cards is easy for parents, child care helpers, or older children. You need scissors, pens or crayons, and stiff paper. Cards such as these can be made about any subject, and can be a valuable learning tool because of their ability to stimulate discussion. They are also a fun way for children to learn about important, and potentially life saving, issues.

The children's view

The Community Mothers project, which previously received support from the Foundation, operates in different parts of Dublin, Ireland. Through home visitors the project reaches parents who are disadvantaged because of low-incomes, isolation or lack of facilities. The project produces a magazine called Community Link. It contains contributions from the home visiting mothers, staff of the project and children. These extracts from Community Link are all written by children about their mothers.

My Mum is doing a great job

Hello! My name is Wesley Murphy. My Mum is a Community Mother. She does seven visits a month. She looks forward to seeing the babies every month to see if they are getting big and if they have done anything new this month. Sometimes she has to go to houses two or three times, but my Mum does not give up easily, she keeps on going back until she gets a reply.

My Mum is a nice person and finds it easy to get on with people. She seems to enjoy giving out her cartoons and filling in forms and some are really funny. I think my Mum is making a great job of it and I am very proud of her.

Wesley Murphy (aged 11)

Mothers need help

It is a very hard thing to be a mother.
They need help.
They work every day.
They cook, clean, wash the delph.
Rinse the sink,
Peel potatoes,
Wash floors,
Make the dinner,
Put up with children moaning and giving back cheek.
Most of all,
The things mothers hate most of all
Is smacking and giving out to children.

Aisling Geary (aged 9)

Mothers

Mothers are the greatest
thing a person ever had
That's why God made mothers.
For the joy and love they have.
The joy is something special
that every Mother has:
the joy is real magic
that glows inside the heart.
That's why God made mothers.

The second is a very special love.
made from God above.
The love inside is very dear.
no man can buy with a million pounds.
That's why God made mothers.
for the joy and love they have.

Mary Denton (aged 10)

Bernard van Leer Foundation

Newsletter

Number 72 October 1993

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About the Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation is an international, philanthropic and professional institution based in The Netherlands. The Foundation's income is derived from the Van Leer Group of Companies – established by Bernard van Leer in 1919 – a worldwide industrial enterprise of which the Foundation is the principal beneficiary. Created in 1949 for broad humanitarian purposes, the Foundation concentrates on the development of low-cost, community-based initiatives in early childhood care and education for socially and culturally disadvantaged children from birth to eight years of age.

The Foundation provides financial support and professional guidance to governmental, academic and voluntary bodies setting up projects to enable disadvantaged children to benefit fully from educational and social development opportunities. The Foundation currently supports approximately 100 major projects in some 40 developing and industrialised countries. The dissemination, adaptation and replication of successful project outcomes are crucial to the Foundation's work.

Grants are not made to individuals nor for general support to organisations. The Foundation does not provide study, research or travel grants. No grants are made in response to general appeals. In accordance with its statutes, the Foundation gives preference to countries in which the Van Leer Group of Companies is established.

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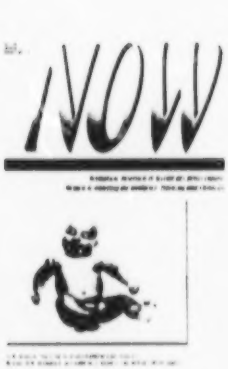
Newslines

NOW - New Opportunities for Women



In 1992, 15 people from projects in six European countries met together three times to discuss their work experiences. The participants came from France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Greece; and are all involved, in varying degrees, in projects for training long-term unemployed women; women re-entering the workforce for jobs in childcare; or improving the chances of women entering the labour market by increasing the provision of good quality childcare facilities.

These meetings took place under the auspices of the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) initiative of the European Community. The NOW programme was created by the Commission of the European Community in December 1990 to promote equality of opportunities for women in professional training and employment.

During one of these meetings, the possibility of disseminating information on women in the labour force and quality child care within the different countries was discussed. It was decided that the Network organise a workshop around a relevant theme three times a year, and issue a magazine about this theme. The first magazine was issued in Spring 1993 and its topic was 'Women re-entering the workforce: training and childcare'. The magazine looks at the contents of the projects involved in this NOW activity, and how each project is related to the political situation in its country in terms of childcare and training programmes for unemployed women. The attractively illustrated magazine is easy to read, is in English and French and provides relevant background material on the situation in Europe regarding child care, and the difficulties faced by working women. It would be useful for all those concerned with providing child care for working mothers.

Further information: VBJK (Resource and Training Centre for Child Care), University of Ghent, Dunantlaan 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium.